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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: ZAPATERO GOVERNMENT AUTHORIZES AFGHANISTAN
CONTRIBUTION; PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL LIKELY

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission J. Robert Manzanares,
reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: The Zapatero government's Council of Ministers approved July 2 a substantial increase in Spain's presence in Afghanistan. Zapatero will put the contribution to a parliamentary vote Tuesday, July 6. We expect parliament to approve the contribution. The GOS has proposed to increase its Afghanistan presence to a total of between 940 and 1,040 troops. In addition, according to the GOS plan, Spain would contribute 4 helicopters, 2 C-130s and a field hospital. Included in the 940-1,040 figure would be a battalion of 400-500 troops to provide security for elections. This is welcome news from the Zapatero government and the first sign it wishes to stay engaged in fighting international terror since Zapatero pulled Spain's troops from Iraq. End summary.

2. (U) Zapatero's Council of Ministers formally approved the Afghanistan contribution that Foreign Minister Moratinos and Defense Minister had briefed to the Congress's foreign affairs and defense committees July 1. Of the total of 940-1,040 troops, 540 troops would be distributed among Spain's 115-troop contribution to Eurocorps, a field hospital, support for 4 helicopters and 2 C-130s and other support and protection elements. In addition, the GOS has proposed to send a battalion of 400-500 troops for a total of 90 days to provide security for Afghan elections currently expected to be held in September.

3. (U) The Zapatero government also announced it plans to withdraw its frigate currently supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in the Indian Ocean (with its 217 sailors), and approximately 130 additional troops currently stationed in Afghanistan.

4. (C) Comment: This long awaited announcement from the Zapatero government is welcome news and represents the first significant sign the GOS wishes to stay engaged in the fight against international terror since it withdrew Spain's troops from Iraq in May. Zapatero has said he will seek a vote in parliament to support the Afghanistan deployment, and all indications are the legislature will handily approve the move. The vote will likely happen Tuesday, July 6.

ARGYROS